DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY F. Schmelzer DATE 7/2/85
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DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

HKF (98)

Dear Senator Anderson:

The President has asked that I reply to your letter of April 5 expressing concern over possible Saudi transfer of arms to Palestinian terrorists and your request that the allegations be carefully and quickly investigated. You also expressed concern over Saudi Arabia's ability and intent to control weapons provided for its use.

Based on serial numbers provided by the Israelis, the Pentagon has investigated the origin of the equipment used by the terrorists. With the exception noted below, none of the equipment or munitions had been sold to Saudi Arabia.

In August 1976 the Israelis captured two Palestinian terrorists in possession of U.S.-origin grenades and demolition bricks. Through lot numbers we traced these munitions to shipments made to Saudi Arabia. (The M-67 grenade production series, however, was sold not only to Saudi Arabia but to twenty-six other countries including Ethiopia, the Yemen Arab Republic, Jordan and Israel.) Additional demolition bricks and grenades from these lots were also captured from the Palestinians last month. When we brought the original case to the Saudis' attention they replied that they had transferred these items to the Lebanese Army prior to the outbreak of civil strife at a time when the United States Government had expressed to the Saudi Government its concern over the perilous state of the Lebanese security forces and had discussed what might be done to improve the situation. During these discussions we reiterated the requirement for our express written U.S. consent to such transfers and in a formal letter Defense Minister Prince Sultan reaffirmed his

The Honorable
Wendell R. [illegible],
United States Senate.

Government's intention to adhere strictly to U.S. regulations governing military sales, particularly provisions governing transfer to third parties. The Saudis concluded that following the disintegration of the Lebanese Army the munitions found their way into the hands of Palestinian terrorists or were stolen by them. We agree with that assumption.

On the more general question of Saudi ability and intent to control whatever weapons are provided, the judgment of the Department of Defense, based on Saudi performance over the years, is that Saudi procedures governing the security of U.S. equipment is excellent. The Department of State shares this judgment. We therefore have concluded that compromise of the F-15 is highly unlikely.

Sincerely,

Douglas J. Bennet, Jr.
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

Drafted: NEA/ARP:BKBodine
4/28/78:x23121

Clearances: NEA/ARP:JWTwinam
NEA:RNeumann
H:RFlaten

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

REFERRAL

Date: 13 APRIL 1978
NSC log# 205[illegible]

MEMORANDUM FOR:

PETER TARNOFF
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Congressional Correspondence

To: PRES.

From: SENATOR WENDELL ANDERSON

Date: 5 APRIL 1978

Subject: PROPOSED SALE OF F-15S TO SAUDI ARABIA AND TRANSFER OF THESE WEAPONS TO ILLEGAL USE.

ACTION REQUESTED:

XXXX Direct Reply

XXXXX Copy of Interim Reply and Incoming Attached

XXXXX Furnish info copy

COMMENTS: Please furnish a reply within seven days.
Thank you.

for CHRISTINE DODSON
STAFF SECRETARY

7807458

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 13, 1978

Dear Senator Anderson:

Your letter of April 5 to the President concerning the proposed sale of F-15s to Saudi Arabia and the possible transfer of U.S.-origin military equipment has come to my attention. I appreciate your candid assessment of this issue and have asked the Department of State to provide a more detailed response to the points you have raised.

Sincerely,

Zbigniew Brzezinski

The Honorable Wendell R. Anderson
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

HARRY F. BYRD, JR., VA.
SAM NUNN, GA.
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FRANCIS J. SULLIVAN, STAFF DIRECTOR

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

7807458

April 5, 1978

NSC

President Jimmy Carter
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Mr. President:

I am sure you are as appalled as I am that American weapons sold to the Saudi Arabians as defensive weapons may have been used by Palestinian terrorists in their senseless attack which killed 35 Israelis last month.

It would be ironic if the P.L.O., handmaiden of Soviet meddling in the Middle East, should also be armed in any way by us.

I urge our government to investigate these allegations carefully and quickly. If true, they raise serious questions as to the Saudis' ability to assure us beyond a doubt that they can prevent the use of F-15's in military offensives against Israel.

I know that a hand grenade is not an F-15, but the issue is not the size of the weapon, but the ability and intent to control whatever weapons are provided for defensive use.

Americans, I am sure you will agree, must avoid being the inadvertent accomplices of P.L.O. terrorists. To hand them a weapon and disclaim responsibility is cowardly and irresponsible.

I look forward to our government's early report on this matter.

Sincerely,

Wendell R. Anderson

Wendell R. Anderson
United States Senator

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